

Worksheet
Section 18 Review and Supplemental Information Report
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

District/Forest:	<u>Mount Rogers NRA, George Washington and Jefferson NFs</u>
Proposed Action Title/Type:	<u>Horse Heaven Prescribed Fire Treatments</u>
Location/Legal Description:	<u></u>
Applicant (if any):	<u></u>

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

This project will implement prescribed (Rx) fire treatments on Horse Heaven Mountain and Hurricane Mountain (see Horse Heaven Fuel Plots map) to reduce fuel loading, enhance habitat for fire-influenced species, control invasive and undesirable species, improve the quality and quantity of forage, and improve, enhance, and maintain open grassy areas on approximately 1,150 acres in two treatment areas. Treatments will be implemented as field conditions and funding warrant and will occur during the non-growing or dormant seasons.

B. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

2004_0227_Horse Heaven_DM.pdf - this is the original Decision document authorizing the project.

2004_0220_Horse Heaven_BE.pdf – this is the Biological Evaluation / Biological Assessment to support the 2004 Decision Memo.

2020_0529_HorseHeavenRX_BE_Amendment.pdf – this document is an amendment to the previous Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment for the Horse Heaven Rx fire project.

C. Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and Program Plan Conformance

Revised Land and Resource Management Plan Jefferson National Forest, Management Bulletin R8-MB-115A. (01/2004)

D. Determination of NEPA Adequacy

Considering any new information or changed circumstances that were not present when the original decision(s) was/were made, are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the action essentially the same as those originally analyzed? Consider new laws or policies, new species or critical habitat designations, new uses in the project area, fires and other vegetation changing events, land exchanges or boundary adjustments.

1) Biological.

A review of the original project Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment (BE) was performed to account for the designation of several new federally-listed threatened and endangered species. It is in the 2020_0529_HorseHeavenRX_BE_Amendment.pdf document.

The review came to the same determinations at the previous BE. However, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) was not federally listed species when the original BE was written. Some current regional forest sensitive species were also not assessed, including eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis leibii*), tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), and regal fritillary butterfly (*Speyeria idalia*).

Implementing the prescribed burn **may affect, likely to adversely affect** the northern long-eared bat. However, there are no effects beyond those previously disclosed in the programmatic biological opinion on implementing the final 4(d) rule dated January 5, 2016.

Implementing the prescribed burn **may impact but not likely to trend towards federal listing** for sensitive species discussed in the review document.

Specialist signature: /s/ Brittany B. Phillips Title: Wildlife Biologist

Date: 11/05/2020

E. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the changed circumstances or new information given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes. The original decision document was a Decision Memo. The project was categorically excluded from analysis in an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement through 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6); this category is still in effect.

F. Can you reasonably conclude that new information and/or changed circumstances would not substantially change the analysis or the decision?

Yes, it can be reasonably concluded that this new information would not substantially change the analysis or decision.

G. Was the public involvement and review associated with the existing NEPA document(s) adequate?

Additional scoping was conducted for the proposed action. The interested parties contacted on 10/19/20 were Russell Proctor-Virginia Department of Forestry and Rene Hypes-Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation.

We received one response from Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on November 2, 2020. The comments were reviewed and considered by the project review team, but no changes were made to the proposal or decision.

Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that the original analysis for this action is adequate with the additional review of the BE and the solicitation of current stakeholder feedback. A new or supplemental analysis is not necessary.

Project Lead

Signature: /s/Colten Moor Title: South Zone Assistant Fire Management Officer

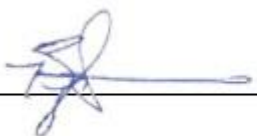
Date: 11/03/2020

NEPA Coordinator

Signature: /s/Christopher Brown Title: South Zone NEPA Planner

Date: 11/03/2020

Responsible Official

Signature:  _____

Barry Garten, Area Ranger

Date: 11/11/2020

Note: The signed Conclusion on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the Forest Service's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision.